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[Sept.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

AFFAIRS between France and Austria, still continue as they were settled by the armistice concluded after the battle of Wagram. Contrary to our expectations, peace has not yet been officially announced: the appearance of a powerful diversion operating in her favour, may have given Austria spirit to resist the hard terms which she had a right to expect, but this diversion terminating with our unfortunate Expedition, the humiliation of that power cannot be much longer delayed.

It is with pain that we advert to this expedition, especially when we contemplate the deplorable state in which it has returned to our shores, and contrast it with the high hopes and exultation with which it sailed to the coast of Holland. Our prediction of its utility has been unhappily verified; not one has been attained of all the original objects, but the capture of Flushing, which was gotten and is still retained by a most ruinous waste of valuable lives. A sickly climate operating on disappointment has induced such a mortality amongst the troops remaining in the island of Walcheren, that if it is not soon totally abandoned, we may expect to hear of the garrison falling an easy prey to the enemy.

In Spain the supreme Junta goes on talking of the exploits of their troops and the patriotism of the country, while their armies are retreating, and two gallant officers whom we have sent to that kingdom on discovery, have been compelled to retreat also, and exposed to imminent peril, for want of finding this boasted patriotism. We are again it is true, amused with hopes of the Cortez being assembled; but, with the true constitutional deliberation of Spaniards, they will allow 100,000 more Frenchmen to get on the western side of the Pyrenees, before half the Representatives of the nation are collected at Seville. The cause of Spain, or rather of that party which has taken up the cause of Ferdinand the vii. may now be considered as desperate; and this may occasion less regret, as the contest has nearly ruined the country and brought

incalculable misery on individuals, and from the unfortunate turn it has taken, would not, even if successful, promote the cause of freedom or add to the stock of public or private happiness. From the ominous aspect of the battle of Talavera, we were apprehensive that Lord Wellington would hardly be able to effect his retreat to any place of tolerable security; and we are now better satisfied that he has gotten his army back to Portugal, though with considerable loss and subjected to many deprivations, than if he had advanced triumphantly to Madrid depending upon the noisy patriotism of its inhabitants, and the hollow assistance of Cuesta. He has been inconsiderably censured for advancing so far, and so hastily into Spain, without knowing his ground; ascertaining more accurately the dependence to be placed upon his fellow general, and the so repeatedly promised assistance and supplies of the supreme junta. The late General Moore got his share of obloquy on the same account: and though the two generals have been blamed by different parties their conduct proceeded from the same cause, they seem to have been influenced by the same motives. Both knew the hazardous part they had to perform, and both appear to have put the ministry in full possession of their sentiments: and yet they were allowed, or rather urged and encouraged to advance both by ministers, and the general opinion entertained at home, of the cordiality of Spaniards, in the cause which we had engaged to promote. We trust that this opinion has already, or will soon undergo a change, and that the whole responsibility of dissipating the resources of the country at this critical juncture, and wasting valuable lives, in useless expeditions, may henceforth remain exclusively with those who are employed to direct the national concerns.

We have little to add in regard to America, to what we have stated about that country in a former number; and that little will be comprised in part of a letter, from an intelligent correspondent in New York

to his friend in this town, who has favoured us with a perusal of it. After recapitulating the various distresses of the people arising from the measures they had been compelled to adopt by the belligerents in Europe, he goes on to say:

"If you can conceive a country labouring under such evils, you may imagine the degree of joy and happiness, diffused on the result of Mr. Erskine's negotiations in April last, which appeared to have put a period to them: but now the ministerial disavowal of a transaction so important in its consequences, has excited a degree of indignation, *equally amongst all parties*, and has given a shock to the English influence in this continent, that it has not experienced since the peace of 1783.

"Attractive and interesting as are the subjects of falling Austria and oppressed Spain; they are but remotely so here, compared to this extraordinary and mysterious conduct of the British ministry. I make use of the word *mysterious*, because the most candid, moderate, and pacific amongst us, so term it, with all the documents that have yet appeared before them. Fortunate, perhaps, it is for both countries, that Congress is not, and will not be for several months in session; catching as they certainly would, the prevailing flame, there is no saying what could allay or extinguish it."

It is not with any spirit of exultation, or dislike to any individuals in office, that we repeat month after month, instances of error, disaster and mismanagement in the foreign concerns of the nation, but from a conviction that all these arise from some glaring defect, which allows a conduct to be pursued contrary to the sentiments, and hostile to the interests of a great majority of the country. We would ask if a mere change of ministers could give *security* to the people, for alleviation of their burthens, and a proper direction for their energies and resources? or if others were appointed to-day, would they be more under popular controul than their predecessors, or entitled to any confidence but what was merely *personal*, and depending on the individuals appointed? if not, then it is not altogether to a change

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of men, we should look for the salvation of the country, nor to a precarious change of measures, depending on any individuals, however much entitled to public confidence, from their private virtues and talents; but to that wholesome control exercised by an independent house of commons, over all public men, which shall compel them according to their abilities, to consult the welfare of the nation, of every individual from whom the emoluments of their office are derived. Such a house of commons, representatives, possessing the people's confidence will not be obtained by a miracle: let the proper means be used, and suitable effects must follow: but should the nation with so many motives to exertion, remain now inactive and supine, they need not expect their affairs to go on more prosperously, and ought never henceforth to complain while with astonishing apathy they refuse to apply the remedy.

BRITISH ISLES.

For this time we comprise what we have to say on our domestic policy under one general head, as applicable alike to the several parts of the empire at home.

Proud in prosperity, uninstructed by adversity, fatuously credulous in believing every improbability, which flatters their prejudices, and obstinately disbelieving or glossing over whatever tends to give an unwelcome view of our situation, the majority appear to rush rashly and inconsiderately forwards on the crisis of our fate.

Untaught by the valuable and dear-bought information received from Sir John Moore, another army is sent out to Spain, and thousands of lives are sacrificed on the chimeraical idea, that our puny cabinet should establish their character for vigour, and be hailed as "the deliverers of Europe." But vigour unaccompanied by prudence and foresight is a dangerous quality, and misdirected energies only waste the strength of a country, and accelerate the crisis of danger.—An expedition is planned to Holland, on a similar delusive scheme; incapability of the commander and the idle pageantry of Lord Castlereagh and Sir William Curtis, like Philip II.

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ostentatiously viewing his Armada, "baptized invincible in vain," form the van, while disease and disappointment follow in the rear of such ill conducted schemes.

It is easy for those who sit quietly at home intent only on the enjoyment of the present moment, indulging in luxury, and fattening on the miseries of their country by their lucrative contracts, their sinecures, their high rated salaries, and the thousand other modes by which the country is drained, to loll at their ease, and talk "of the pomp and circumstance of war." Let us reverse the picture, and behold the distresses of our army, and the sufferings of the unoffending non-military inhabitants of Flushing. Let us divest ourselves of selfish partialities, and in ideal prospect place ourselves, our wives and our children as surrounded with all the horrors of a besieged town, when in addition to the former engines of war the destruction of Congreve's rockets, producing an almost general conflagration is super-added. Such was the state of unoffending and unjustly attacked Copenhagen, and such the situation of suffering Flushing. The time may come when the destructive energies of war may reach our own shores. Are we preparing for such a time, and are we laying up in store, the consolation of having sympathized in the woes of others, and as far as our limited individual influence would extend, borne an undeviating testimony against the unnecessary infliction and spread of the woes of war?

What is likely to result from this attack on Holland, beyond the extention of misery, and an unnecessary and unavailing warfare!

As an atonement for so much mismanagement and suffering, we are told that the Earl of Chatham, and Lord Castlereagh are to secede from the cabinet. So far is well. We know little of the former, and suppose he was only a cypher in the cabinet, and of Lord Castlereagh we know enough to be well pleased at his dismissal. He will not carry into his retirement, the regrets or esteem of the country: But in looking to their probable successors we

see no cause for congratulation. A partial or even a total change in the cabinet affords no well grounded hope of a change of system. We have no confidence in either of the two parties at present struggling for office. Both appear enemies to the cause of reform. It is not a change of men, which will much advantage the country, a change of measures through the medium of a radical reform can alone restore vigour and well grounded confidence to a distressed, agonized and burdened people. In the 10th report of the commissioners of naval revision, in their account of the manner of conducting the affairs of the victualling office, we receive an instructive lesson in the important declaration, "that nothing short of an entire new system in this department is likely to be effectual." We believe this assertion to be true of other departments of the state, and we are confident that these abuses will not be rectified by those who have an interest in their continuance. An energetic demand on the part of the people for a parliamentary reform, can alone secure the removal of the abuses which have been accumulating through successive administrations—Restore purity to the house of Commons, that they may no longer have an interest separate from the people, but become, as they are bound in duty, the watchful guardians of the public purse. Notwithstanding recourse has been had to an old trick of policy to divide, and that the Earl of Selkirk, has attempted to throw the apple of discord among reformers, we are decidedly friends to political reform, as affording the only secure basis for economical reform: We wish the people to be aroused from their lethargy, to be sensible of the impolicy of the present disastrous war, and of the waste of national strength, in an improvident and corrupt expenditure.

After the wanton abuse which has been heaped on Bonaparte and the French, for their cruelty and inhumanity, it is consolatory to those who wish to think well of our common nature, to find, from the dispatch of lord Wellington, that the wounded left behind at Talavera, are treated with the greatest humanity by the French. Let us, hereafter, struggle against our worst

passions, and do justice to the virtues of our enemies, and bear to hear them praised when they deserve it. We fervently wish that the Imperial parliament will never again, in a supposed scarcity of bark, pass an act to attempt to deprive the hospitals of the nations with whom we may happen to be at war, of this salutary drug, and for which it is said that our own army in Holland is now suffering, owing to our cruel restriction to allow its exportation into that country; as, on the army chests being exhausted, the chemists' shops in Middleburgh were found destitute of a supply, owing, as they allege, to the monopoly attempted by this country, with the view, as was boasted, of distressing our enemies. By a just retribution, we now are likely to feel the evil consequence of this crooked policy. While war is carried on, we deprecate every measure calculated to encrease its asperities, and gladly embrace this opportunity of mentioning, with deserved approbation, the kindness manifested by the French to our wounded soldiers in Spain. We entirely disapprove of the attempts too often successfully made to embitter the public mind against France, and thus add to the spirit of hostility already too prevalent in the world.

In many places, we are informed, that public dinners, rejoicings, and illuminations, are to take place on the 25th of next month, being the commencement of the fiftieth year since the coronation of the king. We suppose this is intended to be the rallying point of loyalty according to the fashionable definition of the word. The aldermen, and other bloated capitalists, who feel but little of the weight of taxation on their large accumulated masses, may feast, if they please, and shew their loyalty, and eat their turtle at the same time, but why call on the people to rejoice? The present has been a disastrous reign:—are we to rejoice for the separation of America by unwise councils; the abridgement of liberty, or the dreadfully oppressive increase of the national debt, arising from wars which have occupied the half of the last fifty years?

Do the events of the present year

call for rejoicing? Are we so well satisfied with the abuses which have been dragged forth into the face of day, in the army department, and with the mismanagement of affairs in Spain and Holland, including the discomfiture of our ally at the battle of Wagram, that we should be called on to demonstrate the effusions of joy? If external demonstrations were of any avail, or if they would tend to alter our state, we conceive that mourning, much more than feasting, should characterize our feelings for the state of our country, and for the widely-extended sufferings which mark the present crisis.

The Common Council of the city of London have also resolved to commemorate this anniversary. Some opposition was made, but the spirit of supposititious loyalty prevailed—a loyalty of which a selfish interest, or an attachment for the sake of enjoying some private emolument, is a chief ingredient. Loyalty is now defined to be an attachment to the person of the monarch; true loyalty consists in an obedience to the laws, and a due regard to the principles, and various component parts of the constitution, of which the preservation of the liberties of the commons, or people, forms as essential a part as the prerogative of the king, or the privileges of the nobles. Sir William Curtis, in his enumeration of the blessings of the present reign, unluckily mentioned the suppression of general warrants. He omitted to state that these warrants had been used by a corrupt administration, and suppressed by the firmness of an upright judge, the late Lord Camden, in opposition to the wishes of the Court.

The names of Chatham and Camden remind us of the contrast between the fathers and sons of these names. The virtues of the older Pitt, and the inflexible patriotism of a Pratt, sacrificing place to honour, entitle them to the grateful applause of posterity—but of their sons, including our late absurdly named heaven-born minister, we may say with the poet,

“Lord! how unlike their worthy sires of old.”

But the times are changed, and a cringing to existing circumstances has usurped the place of manly patriotism

of which, in a great measure, only the recollection, in former and better times, now exists.

The landed and commercial aristocracy may feast, and, being themselves snug, may look round in listless indifference; and say, things are going on very well. The noise of revelry and mirth may be intended to drown the voice of suffering, and lead away from the contemplation of our present state; but amidst the exterior of rejoicings, and the glare of illuminations, many a sorrowful heart will sigh over the miseries of their relatives who fell in Spain and Holland, and feel the pressure of the times abridging one by one their little comforts, and forcing them to lessen their necessary and almost unavoidable expences, through the encreasing weight of taxation and exclaim with an heartfelt sorrow, "Surely these rejoicings cannot be intended to insult our miseries; but in the present situation of affairs, we can see no just cause for such tumultuous effusions of joy." Nor does the pageantry of going to church in the morning, make the intended Jubilee more reconcileable to pure and enlightened sentiment. It is an odd junction of the exterior of the offices of religion in the morning, and of the debauch and dance in the evening. The pulpit is seldom employed to expose the errors of superiors, and impartiality should silence the voice of praise. During the investigation of the shocking enormities dragged forward to public notice in last session, we have not heard of the pulpit exercising its correctorial powers. Will its ministers unawed by fear, and uninfluenced by hope, come forth at the Jubilee, to tell a plain unvarnished tale, or point out our real state without gloss or covering?

Amid so many tragedies we have had the interlude of a duel between George Canning, and Lord Castlereagh. The consolation results that one must now resign his seat in the cabinet, or probably both go out, and in case of either's resigning the country sustains no loss. We have to choose between the petulant prigishness of the one, and the profligate apostacy of the other; but we think the well known trafficker for union votes and parliamentary seats, sinks the lowest in the scale of demerit.

Alas! how fallen! POOR HONOUR AND HONESTY!

These times bear peculiarly hard on the middle classes of society. The labouring class, and the lower classes of mechanics have received an increase of wages, and the rich, especially the monied aristocracy, have only a little taken by taxation out of a great heap. But those dependent on fixed incomes, or the earning of a retail or small trade, are peculiarly oppressed by the weight of taxes. It is asserted that 800 persons in one parish in the neighbourhood of London were returned as unable to pay the assessed taxes; whilst from the rigorous orders issued to the tax gatherers, a considerable number of those officers tendered their resignations in preference to enforcing payment from persons whom they considered incapable to pay. Is this a cause for rejoicing, or for returning thanks? It is one of the dismal effects of the wars in which this country has been engaged, and which the majority of the people so thoughtlessly promote by giving their approbation to them.

"We have offended, O my countrymen,
We have offended very grievously,
And have been tyrannous. From east to
west,

A groan of accusation pierces heaven.
Secure from actual warfare we have lov'd
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for
war!

We, this whole people, have been clamorous,

For war and bloodshed! animating sports
The which we pay for, as a thing to talk
of

Spectators, and not combatants! Boys
and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a
child

Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement of our morning
meal,

And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide,
We join no feeling and attach no form,
As if the soldier died without a wound."

COLERIDGE.

We greatly fear that this love for war leagued with some of our bad passions is a prevailing error, and is so general among the people, as to form some kind of excuse for govern-

ment for the many wars carried on by them. The people are now called upon by imperious necessity to consider to what a tremendous crisis, our ruinous wars, and enormous expenditures are rapidly conducting us; to pause in the midst of our career before it is too late, and to try to avert the danger, while yet it may be in the power of rulers and people to prevent a general crash. Deep thoughtfulness, and not feasting, or illuminations, or the parade of religion, should characterize the present period!

As among the prominent transactions of the month, we can scarcely avoid mentioning the uproar which has taken place at Covent-garden theatre, for several successive nights, on its re-opening, after having been destroyed last year by fire. The contest with the managers, is on account of a demand for an advance, in the prices of admission, and for employing a noted Italian singer in preference to English performers. As a resistance to imposition and to the extravagant salary paid to the singer, we might applaud this opposition if we did not perceive a considerable portion of that illiberalism against foreigners, for which the English nation is notorious, mixed up in it; and if we did not think that theatrical contests are of quite too trivial importance, and unworthy of engaging public attention in the midst of our present pressing difficulties. It is among the symptoms of a falling em-

pire, when the people neglect the serious consideration of their public affairs, to be engrossed with the concerns of mimic scenery. In the downfall of the Greek empire, in the 6th century, Constantinople and the empire were disturbed by the green and blue factions at the Hippodrome, the place of amusement of that day. Gibbon, recounting the commotions of these rival factions, pointedly remarks, "As long as the party was successful, its deluded followers appeared careless of private distress or public calamity. It was the license, without the freedom of democracy."

We understand, that several objections to the political discussions which appeared in this Magazine, have from time to time been sent for insertion to the editors of the News-papers in this town, but they have declined entering into the controversy. Confiding in the omnipotence of truth over error, as friends to fair discussion, and desirous that the present crisis should be illustrated, by the temperate examination of the passing events, in every point of view, we give notice, that we are willing to admit into our pages, remarks controverting the line of politics which we have adopted, provided they are written with decorum and moderation, and of such a length as not to interfere with that portion, which in our miscellaneous arrangement, can be spared to politics.

PUBLIC OCCURRENCES.

BRITISH.

Duel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning.

A Duel was fought on the morning of the 21st September between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning. In consequence of a misunderstanding which has long subsisted between the parties, they met this morning, by appointment, at six o'clock, on Putney Common. Lord Yarmouth was the bearer of the challenge from Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Canning, and also the friend who attended his Lordship to the ground.

Charles Rose Ellis, esq. a West India Merchant, attended as the second

of Mr. Canning. On each firing a shot no harm was done; and Lord Castlereagh not acknowledging himself satisfied, the parties proceeded to fire again, without exchanging a word. Lord Castlereagh's second shot passed through Mr. Canning's thigh without coming in contact with the bone, and thus the affair finished. Lord Castlereagh and his friend drove immediately to White's, in St. James's-street, and there breakfasted. Mr. Canning was immediately conveyed home, and did not experience much pain. After his wound was dressed, he wrote a few lines to a relation in the city, to the following effect:—